

# Herero language

**Herero** (English: /hɛˈrɛəroʊ/, *Otjiherero*) is a language of the Bantu subfamily of the Niger–Congo group. It is spoken by the Herero and Mbanderu peoples in Namibia and Botswana, as well as a small communities of people in southwestern Angola. There were 211,700 speakers in 2014.<sup>[1]</sup>

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## Distribution

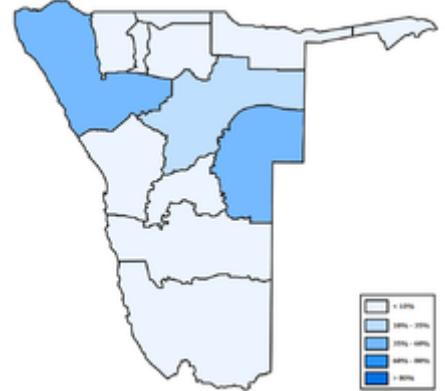
Its linguistic distribution covers a zone called Hereroland, a zone constituted of the region of Omaheke along with the Otjozondjupa and Kunene Regions. The Himba people, who are related to the Herero and Mbanderu, speak a dialect very close to Otjiherero. Many Herero-speakers live in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia.

## Phonology

### Consonants

<b>Herero</b>	
<i>Otjiherero</i>	
<b>Native to</b>	Namibia, Botswana, Angola
<b>Region</b>	Kunene, Omaheke Region and Otjozondjupa Region in Namibia; Ghanzi in Botswana; Namibe, Huíla and Cunene in Angola
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Herero, Himba, Mbanderu, Tjimba, Kwisi, Twa
<b>Native speakers</b>	211,700 (2014) <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Language family</b>	Niger–Congo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Atlantic–Congo</li> <li>▪ Volta–Congo</li> <li>▪ Benue–Congo</li> <li>▪ Bantoid</li> <li>▪ Southern Bantoid</li> <li>▪ Bantu</li> <li>▪ Kavango – Southwest Bantu</li> <li>▪ Southwest Bantu</li> <li>▪ <b>Herero</b></li> </ul>
<b>Dialects</b>	Himba Kuvalé Zemba (Thimba, <i>Otjizemba</i> ) Hakawona ( <i>Otjihakawona</i> ) Botswana Herero
<b>Language codes</b>	
<b>ISO 639-1</b>	hz ( <a href="https://www.loc.gov/standards/isob639-2/php/langcod">https://www.loc.gov/standards/isob639-2/php/langcod</a> )

	es_name.php?iso_639_1=hz) Herero
<b>ISO 639-2</b>	her ( <a href="https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=185">https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=185</a> ) Herero
<b>ISO 639-3</b>	her Herero
<b>Glottolog</b>	here1253 ( <a href="http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/here1253">http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/here1253</a> ) Herero <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Guthrie code</b>	R.30 (R31, 311, 312); R.101 (Kuvale) <sup>[3]</sup>



The disparate distribution of the Herero language in Namibia, showing the concentration of Herero speakers on the Kalahari boundary in the east, as well as the outlying Herero-speaking Himba people of the Kaokoveld in the far northwest.

<b>Herero</b>	
<b>Person</b>	<i>Omuhherero</i>
<b>People</b>	<i>Ovaherero</i>
<b>Language</b>	<i>Otjihherero</i>

		Bilabial	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	plain	p		t̪	t		k	
	prenasal	m̪b		n̪d	n̪d		n̪g	
Fricative	plain		(f)	θ	(s)			h
	voiced		v	ð				
Affricate	plain					tʃ		
	prenasal					n̪dʒ		
Trill					r			
Nasal		m		n̪	n	ŋ		
Approximant		w			(l)	j		

The sounds /f s l/ are found in loanwords.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i i:		u u:
Mid	ɛ ɛ:		ɔ ɔ:
Open		a a:	

## Script

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Because of the translation of missionary Gottlieb Viehe (1839–1901) of the Bible into Herero, at the end of the 19th century, the spoken language was transcribed to an alphabet based on the Latin script. Father Peter Heinrich Brincker (1836–1904) translated several theological works and songs.

## Education

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Otjiherero is taught in Namibian schools both as a native tongue and as a secondary language. It is included as a principal material at the University of Namibia. Otjiherero is also one of the six minority languages that are used by the Namibian State Radio (NBC). Gamsberg Macmillan, as of 2008, has published the only dictionary in Otjiherero.

## Varieties

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The Hakaona variety is now considered a separate Bantu language, as sometimes is Zemba (*Otjizemba*).<sup>[5]</sup> Maho (200) also removes Kuvale to Bantu Zone R.10, while differentiating North-West Herero (Kaokoland Herero, including Zemba and presumably Himba and Hakaona), R.311, and Botswana Herero (including Mahalapye Herero), R.312, as distinct from but closely related to Herero proper. Within Herero proper, he recognizes two dialects: Central Herero and Mbandero (East Herero).

Northwest/Zemba is found on either side of the Namibian–Angolan border. Central Herero covers a large area in central Namibia, with East Herero a few islands to the east but still in Namibia. Botswana Herero consists of a few scattered islands in Botswana, with about 15% the population of Herero proper.<sup>[3]</sup>

*Ethnologue* separates Zimba as a distinct language but retains Himba, East Herero and Botswana Herero within the Herero language. However, it no longer recognizes Kuvale as a dialect.<sup>[6]</sup> Kuvale has not yet been designated as a separate language or as a dialect affiliated with another language.

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with  
[Herero language](https://www.ethnologue.com/16/show_language/her) ([https://www.ethnologue.com/16/show\\_language/her](https://www.ethnologue.com/16/show_language/her)) at *Ethnologue* (16th ed., 2009)

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